

Press release for the “New Computer and Internet Use Policy at the Library”

Wednesday, April 8, 2015

For Immediate Release:

On Monday, March 16, 2015, City Council approved the *Computer and Internet Use Policy* now in effect at the library. The policy was drafted by the Library Director, Shannon Romtvedt, based on policies used at other libraries and a great deal of input and research from the Library Board.

One rule that is a significant change from the previous policy is stated here:

“Children under 10 years of age must be directly supervised by a parent/legal guardian or adult caregiver when using the computer. Parents/legal guardians who wish to restrict computer access for a minor (age 17 or younger) may do so at any time by requesting a *Minor Internet Access Restriction form*.”

The previous policy required written parental permission for minors to use the computer. Children under the age of 13 needed direct parental supervision to use the Internet. Reasoning for the change is as follows:

- 1) Many libraries are revising their Internet Policy and are no longer requiring parental permission for minors. Sandy Public Library made the change in November 2014, stating that “A lot of libraries made the decision (to require formal parent permission) when the Internet was very new.”
- 2) More efficient for staff to check for minors specifically restricted from using the computers (versus checking a long list of minors permitted to use the computers and maintaining that list). Most parents sign the permission form and as minors reach the age of 18, the list needs regular updating.
- 3) Removing the requirement for permissions is less of a barrier for students coming to the library to use the computers for homework. In the past, a child or teen would have to take the form home and return it to the library before using the computer if a parent/guardian was not present to sign the form.

While parental permission is no longer required for minors to use the computer at the library, parents/legal guardians may at any time fill out a *Minor Internet Access Restriction form* if they **do not** want their child(ren) using public computers. Forms are available at the library. For questions or concerns, please contact the Library Director, Shannon Romtvedt, (503) 429-1818 or shannonr@vernonia-or.gov.

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